of India's Representative for Naga Peace Talks. However, any efforts on the part of Chief Minister, Members of Parliament and leading citizens to bring the militant outfits to the negotiating table, are welcome.

Clashes between two communities at Talhan, Punjab

2448. SHRI K.B. KRISHNA MURTHY: Will the Minister of HOME AFFAIRS be pleased to state:

(a) whether the Centre has asked for a report from the State Government over the recent clashes between two communities at Talhan (Punjab);

(b) whether the National Commission for SC/ST has blamed the district administration for lapses leading to clashes at Talhan;

(c) whether it is a fact that the Central Intelligence Agency of the US has also submitted a situation report on Talhan clashes to Government of India; and

(d) if so, Government's reaction on this report?

THE MINISTER OF STATE IN THE MINISTRY OF HOME AFFAIRS (SHRI I.D. SWAMI): (a) Yes, Sir.

(b) The National Commission for SC/ST have reported that their team of officers headed by DIG (P) made an on the spot enquiry and the Commission made recommendation to the Government of Punjab. The findings of the Commission are that the police including the SHO appeared to have played a partisan role by not providing the protection, which was sought by the Scheduled Caste community of Talhan and have instead indulged in an uncalled for lathi-charge. The Administration instead of shifting the SHO, shielded him and could not take into account the serious implication and left it to-junior functionaries to sort out the issue.

(c) No Sir.

(d) Does not arise.

Economic Union of Southern States

2449. SHRI P. PRABHAKAR REDDY: Will the Minister of HOME AFFAIRS be pleased to state:

(a) whether it is a fact that the Standing Committee of the Southern Zonal Council under the Chairmanship of the Chief Secretary, Government

of Andhra Pradesh proposed the formation of an "Economic Union of Southern States" on the lines of the European Union;

(b) if so, the details thereof and Government's reaction thereto; and

(c) the various States which have opted to join the Union and the subject matters likely to be taken up at this common forum?

THE MINISTER OF STATE IN THE MINISTRY OF HOME AFFAIRS (SHRI I.D. SWAMI): (a) to (c) In its meeting on 21st May 2003 at Hyderabad, the Standing Committee of the Southern Zonal Council under the Chairmanship of the Chief Secretary, Government of Andhra Pradesh felt the need to develop closer corrdination among its member States and it mooted a proposal to constitute the Southern Economic Union to identify specific areas of co-operation to ensure faster growth in trade, commerce industry, tourism and other fields of economic development in the region. There is no proposal under consideration of the Government to set up any economic union for any zone, including the Southern Zone

Damage to Railway Tracks by PWG in Bihar

2450. SHRI RAJKUMAR DHOOT: Will the Minister of HOME AFFAIRS be pleased to state:

(a) whether it is a fact that naxal PWG has damaged the rail tracks at a number of places in Bihar in mid July, 2003;

(b) if so, the details thereof; and

(c) what steps have been taken to prevent recurrence of such incident and to ensure safety of rail passengers?

THE MINISTER OF STATE IN THE MINISTRY OF HOME AFFAIRS (SHRI I.D. SWAMI): (a) and (b) As per available information, MCC (I) is reported to have damaged the Railway properties at a number of places in Bihar and Jharkhand during a call for 'Rail Chakka Jam' from 15th July, 2003.The Railway tracks between the Narkatia Ganj-Balmiki Nagar Section, Samastipur-Darbhanga Section and Muzaffarpur-Sugauli Section and Bargania-Kudwa Chainpur Section have been damaged in the naxalite violence.

(c) The naxalite affected States, DG/CRPF, DG/Railway Protection Force and intelligence Agencies have been sensitized to intensify patrolling, share intelligence and take coordinated measures to prevent or to reduce the intensity of attacks on railway properties by Left Wing extremists.